Message Text

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O R 131500Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6197
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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AMEMBASSY GABORNE
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AMEMBASSY MASERU

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: PINS, PINT, SD

SUBJECT: SECURITY POLICE DETAIN SSRC LEADERSHIP

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1490

- 1. PLANS FOR AN ORDERLY COMMEMORATION OF JUNE 16TH WERE THROWN INTO ALMOST COMPLETE CONFUSION OVER THE WEEKEND AS POLICE OF THE SECURITY BRANCH (DISTINCT FROM SOWETO POLICE COMMAND) OUTFLANKED SOWETO POLICE CHIEF VISSER ON THE RIGHT AND ARRESTED VIRTUALLY ENTIRE LEADERSHIP OF THE SOWETO STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, INCLUDING SSRC PRESIDENT MONTSISI.
- 2. POLICE ARRESTED TWENTY BLACKS, INCLUDING THE ENTIRE "ACTION" COMMITTEE OF THE SSRC. AMONG THOSE ARRESTED WERE KOTSO LENGANE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THABO NDABENI, THE TWO STUDENTS WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED LAST MONTH DURING THE SSRC- URBAN BANTU COUNCIL CONFRONTATION, LATER RELEASED ON THE AUTHORITY OF BRIGADIER VISSER. ALSO ARRESTED WERE FIVE WHITE STUDENT LEADERS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATES-RAND INVOLVED IN PLANNING COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONIES AT THE UNIVERSITY.

3. WHAT REMAINS OF THE SSRC LEADERSHIP ISSUED A STATEMENT CALLING

ON BRIGADIER VISSER "TO RELEASE OUR LEADERS BEFORE WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY

OUR POLICY IS NON-VIOLENT". IN THE MEANTIME, THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS RANKS OF THE SSRC PRODUCED ANOTHER "TEMPORARY" LEADER, JABU MAZIBUKO, A TWENTY YEAR OLD STUDENT AT ORLANDO HIGH IN SOWETO "UNTIL HE (MONTSI SI)

IS RELEASED".

4. THE SSRC STATEMENT REFLECTS SOME CONFUSION ALSO NOTED IN THE PRESS, AS TO WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SEEMING DOUBLE-CROSS ON THE PART OF VISSEER. IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THE ARRESTS OF THE SSRC LEADERSHIP WERE CARRIED OUT BY THE SECURITYPOLICE AND NOT BY THE SOWETO POLICE COMMAND. THE SECURITY POLICE OPERATE WITH VIRTUAL AUTONOMY, ALTHOUGH IIN SOWETO THEY NOMINALLY COOPERATE WITH VISSER AND SERVE UNDER HIS GENERAL COMMAND. AN EFFORT OF THIS MAGNITUDE, SABOTAGING AS IT DOES VISSER'S ATTEMPTS A A "COOPERATIVE" APPROACH TO THE STUDENTS, COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN TAKEN AT THE INSTIGATION

OF SOME HIGHER AUTHORITY (MINISTER OF JUSTICE JIMMY KRUGER). WHERE THIS LEAVES VISSER, NOW DISCREDITED WIT THE STUDENTS, AND THE SSRC' NOW THAT THEIR LEADERSHIP IS SAFELY TUCKED AWAY, IS THE QUESTION OF THE MOMENT. VISSER CAN STILL BE EXPECTED TO ATTEMPT TO AVOID CONFRONTATION BUT WHETHER THE STUDENTS, WITH THEIR LEADERSHIP REMOVED, CAN CONTROL THE MOOD OF THEIR FOLLOWERS OR KEEP THE TSOTSIS IN LINE IS IN DOUBT.

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